



Drop, Cover, and Hold On Earthquake Drill Manual for Businesses



Level 2 – Basic: Life Safety Drill

This drill focuses on immediate life safety and helps participants think through their emergency response actions during an earthquake.

BEFORE the Drill

1. If you will participate in the Great Central U.S. ShakeOut, please register your Business as an official participant at www.shakeout.org/centralus.
2. Let your employees know whether registration will be at the corporate or departmental level or if separate office locations should register individually. (*Registrants may receive e-mail updates and notification of additional information added to the web site.*)
3. If your facility serves the general public, determine how or whether you will involve them in the drill.
4. Let your employees know:
 - The date and time of your drill.
 - How to correctly perform *Drop, Cover, and Hold On*, wherever they are (www.dropcoverholdon.org), which includes taking cover beneath a sturdy table or desk, or dropping to the floor near an interior wall and covering your head with your hands and arms. Develop special procedures for unique locations such as warehouses or offices with glass walls.
 - Your expectations for their participation (i.e., to *Drop, Cover, and Hold On*, then gather at a central location to account for occupants after the shaking stops, etc).
 - If away from the office - set a cell phone alarm for the time of the drill, and to encourage those they are with to participate as well.
 - If unable to *Drop, Cover, and Hold On* during the drill - pause at drill-time to consider what you would do if an earthquake were to strike at that moment.
 - Encourage employees, customers, etc., to invite friends, families, and neighbors to register as individuals or organizations at www.shakeout.org/centralus, so they can participate and receive information directly on how to be safe during an earthquake.
5. Steps or Questions to Consider:
 - How will you direct employees during and immediately following the shaking?
 - Safety must be the first priority, so carefully assess the environment inside and outside of your facility before deciding. Consider factors (your location, building type, damage impacts) that will influence your decisions after the earthquake (i.e., evacuating vs. staying put).
6. Write a brief description of the earthquake's impact, along with questions to consider during the drill. For ideas, review the ShakeOut Scenario at www.shakeout.org/centralus/scenario.
7. **(Optional)** Download realistic sound effects and safety information to play during your drill from <http://www.shakeout.org/centralus/resources>. (*Download and test before the drill. Don't try to play them from the web site during the drill.*)
8. Distribute ShakeOut posters/flyers from <http://www.shakeout.org/centralus/resources> to encourage employees, contractors, etc., to participate.
9. Determine whether to add post-shaking building evacuation to the drill: Based on the age and type of your building and the environment inside/outside of building, etc., determine whether you would evacuate after an earthquake, or whether you would first *assess the building's damage* before directing employees to either stay put or evacuate. Consider what new safety hazards might be caused by the earthquake from fallen or broken objects (both in the building and outside) or ground



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deformation. ***Automatic evacuation after an earthquake may not be a safe action.***

The Night BEFORE the Drill

Tape the brief description of the earthquake's impact under desks and conference tables or provide employees sealed envelopes to open during the drill. (*You can use email, but it is more effective if they do not read this until during the drill.*)

DURING the Drill:

1. Via e-mail, cell phone/text message, public address (PA) system, or verbally (in a real earthquake your signal will be the beginning of shaking itself):

- Announce that the earthquake drill has begun and to *Drop, Cover, and Hold On*.
- (Optional) Play the downloaded sound effects (<http://www.shakeout.org/centralus/resources>) on your PA or on a computer in each office.
- Suggest that while down on the floor, employees look around at what might fall on them during an earthquake. Secure or move items after the drill to prevent injury and damage.

2. If not using optional downloaded sound effects, then after at least one minute, announce that the shaking is over.

3. If your drill includes additional steps or activities such as evacuation to another location, initiate this part of your drill but consider new hazards from fallen or broken objects (both inside and outside the building) or ground deformation that might be caused by the earthquake. ***Automatic evacuation after an earthquake may not be a safe action.***

- During a real earthquake aftershocks may occur. If an aftershock occurs while you are exiting, *Drop, Cover, and Hold On* until the shaking stops.
- When the shaking has stopped (or when the all clear bell rings) IMMEDIATELY and before you exit your room take ten seconds to look around, make a mental note of damage and dangers, check to see if any one is injured. If immediate help can be given to those with injuries to stop serious bleeding, or put out a small fire, do so. Ask others to assist the lightly injured. Non-ambulatory injured should be reassured and wait for treatment where they are, unless it is more dangerous to remain.

4. Encourage employees to discuss their drill experiences, observations and how they could better prepare.